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EDITORIAL

What makes a comic book character "hot?"

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of comic book characters. Some have been around for decades, others were "born yesterday." All of these characters have their fan followings. And some of those followings are huge.

Why? Is it that the hero (or villain) is a classic, that the concept was brilliant and the character improved with each writer's spin? That may be part of it, but there are a lot of classic characters who, to today's fans, seem "old," whether it's true or not. (One great thing about any comic book character is that today's "old hat" can be tomorrow's hit, thanks to a new creative approach. The trick is to be there when it happens.)

So, perhaps the only "hot" characters are *new*, contemporary.

No, this doesn't hold up, either. There are hundreds of "new" characters created every year, by writers and artists for every company, that turn out to be lame. No one sets out to create a lame character, it's just the law of averages. No one hits a home run every time at bat. And not every comic book writer and artist can take time to properly think through every character concept.

So what makes a character, and thereby the title in which the character stars, "hot?"

You tell me.

It's you, the readers, who determine whether or not a series is "hot." What are your reasons for buying a series? I'm not really interested in whether or not a comic is collectible—that's voodoo. Many of today's "collectibles" are tomorrow's basement clutter. No, I want to know what it is about *the characters and the stories* that excite you. What makes you pick up a comic book? What makes you keep picking it up, month to month? Let's turn the MARVEL AGE letters page into a round-robin discussion of what makes a comic book great.

As you write your letters, be sure to stay to the point. Keep your missives a manageable length, so that we can print as many as possible. We want to pull in letter writers from every corner of fandom, near and far.

This could be hot.

—Steve Saffel

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Up Front

MARVEL LAUNCHES JAPANESE ALLIANCE

Space Zero—January 25, 1993, 1:30 pm—a new strategic alliance was launched.

On that date, the Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. and Shogakukan Production Company, Ltd. (Sho Pro) formalized an agreement to bring the Marvel Universe to Japan. Sho Pro is the licensing and merchandising subsidiary Japan's largest publishing conglomerate, whose properties include industry leaders such as Doraemon, Dragon Ball, and Shonen Jump.

Many of Marvel's top executives, including Stan Lee and Marvel President Terry Stewart, were on hand for the event, which involved more than 400 members of the Asian business community. Stewart noted, "Given that the Japanese enjoy action/adventure material, and that virtually everyone there— regardless of age—reads comic books, it seems like a natural marketplace for our characters in terms of both publishing and merchandising."

"To date, there are not American comic books published in Japan," he continued, "and we're confident that Sho Pro will soon make Marvel as prominent in Japan as we already are in so many markets around the world."

BELOW: The new Fantastic Four? Left to right: Marvel President Terry Stewart, Masahiro Oga (of Shogakukan Production Co., Ltd.), the Amazing Spider-Man and Stan Lee.

TOP: Spider-Man proved a global crowd pleaser during the visit to the Asakusa landmark district in downtown Tokyo. ABOVE: Spider-Man was guest of honor at a reception celebrating the new alliance between the Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. and the Shogakukan Production Co., Ltd. Shown with the webbed wonder are his new friends at Sho Pro demon-strating arachnid abilities of their own.

THE BUSTER AWARDS

On Friday, January 29, the CBS television series *Bob* broadcast live from the "Buster Awards" ceremony honoring excellence in the comics industry.

Sergio Aragonés, Bob Kane, Jack Kirby, Mel Lazarus, Jim Lee, Bob McKay, Paul Power, Marc Silvestri, and Harlan Stone were among the industry professionals who participated in the awards ceremony, and MAD DOG has already begun to accumulate awards with "Best Artist" and "Best Comic" honors.

Fans who missed the special telecast will be able to catch up when the episode is repeated later in the season.

MAD DOG: TM & © 1993 Paramount Pictures, Inc.

Artist Bret Blevins (SLEEPWALKER, THE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS) first sculpted the statuette (above), then painted the monochromatic detail onto the figures (below) for the Spider-Man/Venom hologram that will be included in the Marvel IV trading card set from Skybox. This is the statue *before* it was damaged in shipping and subsequently repaired by Bret.

A MODEL TRADING CARD

Holograms made from multi-layered two-dimensional drawings have been a part of the Marvel Universe trading cards since Series I three years ago. But this June, Series IV will premiere a *new* hologram card of Spider-Man battling Venom, produced from a three dimensional model—a hand made statue that will be photographed by a "camera" using a laser beam to create a more life-like image. This process, also used for the Spider-Man 30th Anniversary holograms for the comics, results in a sharper image with a more dramatic depth of field.

Unlike previous models made by an outside sculptor, this one was crafted by Marvel artist Bret Blevins, best known for his penciling on **GHOST RIDER** and **SLEEPWALKER**. Few people were aware that Bret is also an accomplished sculptor. One of the few was Bob Budiansky, Bret's writer on **SLEEPWALKER** and executive editor for Special Projects (the department which designs the cards). When the time came to hire a sculptor, he immediately thought of Bret. "Having a comic book artist do the model makes all the difference," said trading card Editor Tom Brevoort, "Bret knows Marvel characters. The card *looks* like a live image of Spidey fighting Venom." How does this card compare to the Spider-Man 30th Anniversary holograms? Said Tom, "I think it looks better—but don't tell the Spider-Man office I said that!"

Disaster struck when the statue was badly damaged in shipping to the Polaroid Holography studio and had to be returned to Bret for repair. (The photos seen here were taken *before* shipping) Bret was successful and the statue was restored.

There are more such holograms lurking in the near future. For the full story on how they are made, check out **MARVEL AGE #127**.

SHE-HULK GETS A FACE LIFT

This month, in SHE-HULK #52, a new era begins—with the introduction of a new creative team, a gripping storyline, and a new direction.

"We're keeping the humor that made it popular in the first place but adding more serious issues," Editor Reneé Witterstaetter revealed. "There'll be less 'fourth wall' stuff; less characters talking directly to the reader." The issue launches part 1 of the 6 part story line, "To Die and Live in L.A," by series writer Michael Eury, guest penciler Todd Britton, and inker Mike DeCarlo, with a cover by Adam Hughes. The story entails a *Fatal Attraction* type of plot line in which She-Hulk is apparently killed. After having a bizarre near death experience, she returns to life plagued by uncontrollable, wild mood swings that will add a dramatic new edge to the heroine.

The Fantastic Four, Wonder Man, the villainess Titania and the new villain The Rumbler all guest-star in #52, priced at $1.75. Reneé promised that, after this storyline, She-Hulk will "never be the same."

SUPERNATURAL AND EXTRATERRESTRIAL TERRORS

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In the alternate future of the two issue **WARHEADS: BLACK DAWN**, Earth has become a desolate wasteland overrun by hordes of hungry vampires preying on the few humans left. This intense tale written by Craig Houston (**WARHEADS**) and penciled by Charlie Adlard (*Judge Dredd*) stars the Warheads and guest-stars Ghost Rider. With an embossed, red metallic foil cover, the $2.95 premiere issue sends the Warheads to this bleak world in search of plunder. They are almost annihilated by the vampiric monstrosities, and receive an unexpected hand from the Spirit of Vengeance.

"Both Paul Neary (Editor In Chief of Marvel UK) and I thought that the Warheads had become a little too soft," Editor Michael Bennent said. "Paul and I came up with this idea for a hard-hitting action packed story portraying the team the way they *should* be. We added Ghost Rider because he's a fabulous character. I immediately called up Charlie (Adlard) and told him to drop everything and get started on it." **WARHEADS: BLACK DAWN** is available in May.

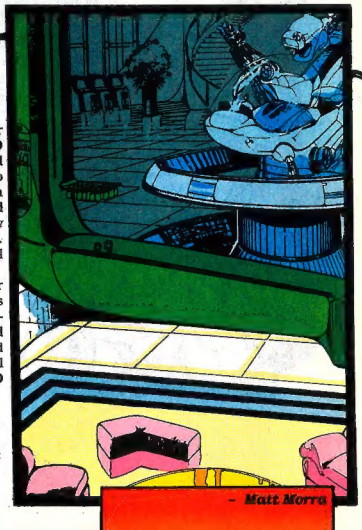
Also in May, the new monthly science-fiction series, **CYBERSPACE 3000**, written by Gary Russell (**DARK ANGEL**) and penciled by Steve Tappin, takes readers to the 31st century of **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY**. The premiere issue features a glow-in-the-dark cover by Liam Sharp (**DEATH'S HEAD II**) and will be $2.95, with subsequent issues $1.75.

In the months before the Badoon invaded the Earth (in **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #1**), the people of Earth built what was to be the first of a fleet of galactic exploration vessels. As the Badoon attacked, some survivors were able to escape in the nearly completed vessel, but not before it was severely damaged. Thus, the disabled ship serves as an intergalactic ark; traveling through space, picking up other alien survivors of Badoon cruelty, and seeking a planet that all the refugees may call home. Along the way, the different species must learn to work together to survive the dangers that face them.

THE X-MANSION UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Every new student at Professor Charles Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters receives a copy of **THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO THE MANSION**, a handbook explaining the layout, features, and inner workings of X-Men HQ. Now the guide is available to everyone as the comic industry's first spiral bound book. With an Andy Kubert cover sporting a fifth color, and a triple gatefold inside, the shrink-wrapped 54-pager includes original art by Richard Bennett, Eliot R. Brown, Henry Flint and Michael Golden. The guide is narrated through Professor Xavier's personal journal entries written by Scott Lobdell (**UNCANNY X-MEN**).

The book takes the reader on a very private tour of the War Room, the Med-Lab, Cerebro, the Game Room, security systems and, of course, the Danger Room. "The information is very user-friendly," Editor Suzanne Gaffney said, "the last thing I wanted was a boring technical manual. I see it as a high-tech DaVinci notebook of sketches, diagrams, scientific facts and personal insight into the mind behind it." **THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO THE MANSION** goes on sale in June for $6.95.



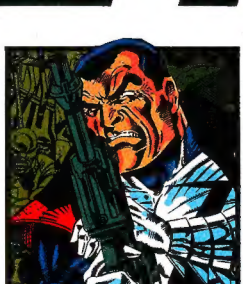
THE FUTURE

The future is expanding. And Editor Joey Cavalieri is hoping that future technology will include cloning ...very soon.

The popularity of the four current 2099 titles has been overwhelming and fans want to see more. This month two new titles, **2099 UNLIMITED** (featuring "Hulk 2099") and **X-MEN 2099** will launch. "I didn't choose them. I think they chose me," Cavalieri said. "**X-MEN** was far and away what [the fans] wanted to see; you can't stop that. But I did get a lot of letters for the Hulk, and the **UNLIMITED** gives me a chance to showcase certain stuff I wouldn't want to give a regular book yet.

"At the very beginning, I couldn't say to anybody, 'okay, here's this spin-off character that I really like, maybe we can develop this into something new.' I had to depend on using previously established Marvel characters, shot ahead one hundred years. Now I don't have to do that anymore. There are so many characters proliferating in **DOOM** and **SPIDER-MAN** now, I can do a story

OF 2099



around *them*, and that's what I'm looking forward to doing in the **UNLIMITED**."

Creation of these titles is usually assisted by "*large* amounts of caffeine and corn chips," Cavalieri said, laughing. "For the X-Men book, Tom DeFalco, Mark Gruenwald, and I met to discuss the setting, and to talk about the characters—we left the office for an entire morning and threw stuff back and forth.

"You want the same kind of energy, you want the same kind of action, the same kind of fun visual excitement you get in a regular book, but again, you don't want to be hidebound by continuity," Cavalieri added. "You want it to be *different*."

As for maintaining the tremendous level of enthusiasm in his group of writers and artists, "I can't say that I've had a real problem," Cavalieri went on, citing examples. "John Moore is a really bright, imaginative guy; Peter [David], is having as much fun as he did with the first issue; everybody seems to be having a real blast. They're not hidebound by current continuity, they don't have to check with somebody else. They ask each other questions or they ask me questions.

"I'll just say, 'try to have fun.' We can do whatever we want. We don't have to worry about what will happen if a character dies, if we blow up a city, or something like that. It doesn't have the same ramifications on the Marvel Universe as it would if we did it in **CAPTAIN AMERICA** or **DAREDEVIL**. The road ahead is wide open.

"What I try to do is make sure everybody gets all the scripts and artwork when I complete a book, so that all the other creative people on the series can expand on what they're doing. They can use it a little bit and they're not contradicting anything."

EXPANDING THE FUTURE

Behind the conception of the quarterly book, **2099 UNLIMITED**, was the need to create an outlet for all those incidental players that have potential to become more. But the book will also include several revolving features starring already established characters in the **2099** Universe.

The stories in **2099 UNLIMITED** will be separate, but they won't contradict the continuity of the ongoing titles. Established characters will be given to different writers and artists who will be allowed their own take on the characters. Spider-Man will be featured prominently in the first two issues, with a creative team of Evan Skolnick, Chris Wozniak, and Chris Ivy.

"You'll see this really feral, ferocious, strange looking beast..."

"We're trying for a different art style on Spider-Man," Cavalieri said. "Chris Wozniak is doing the first Spider-Man story. It's not going to be radically different from what Rick Leonardi does, but different enough; it's closer to the current X-Men style. I'm crazy about Rick's approach but there are always those who like to see something different. So the **UNLIMITED** allows me to do that."

The story will be a little more somber, though Miguel O'Hara will keep his humor and wit throughout. "You'll also get to see a different side of Miguel O'Hara's life," Cavalieri added. "One that you don't see in the current book, at least, not just yet.

"We also get to introduce a new costumed super villain who is interesting," Cavalieri added. "His name is Mutagen, and he'll be around for the first two issues of the **UNLIMITED**." Mutagen, a living defense mechanism; is able to create a perfect defense for any attack that may be made on him. When Mutagen goes on the offensive, and attacks a close friend of Miguel's, it is up to Spider-Man to find a way to combat Mutagen's counterattacking abilities.

Another established Marvel character from today will be shot into the future within the pages of **2099 UNLIMITED**—The Hulk.

The Hulk of **2099** will be based in California, where a natural disaster has turned the state into an island. "It's a place we haven't seen before in the series," Joey said. "The entertainment industry plays a big part in the origin of the character, yet [the approach is] very different from **WONDER MAN**, it's a lot stronger and tougher." And so, when you see the Hulk, "you will see this really ferral, ferocious, strange looking beast that is barely human now."

Writer Gerry Jones and artist Dwayne Turner will be creating the more ferocious Hulk in a special 30-page story in the **UNLIMITED**. "Gerry has a real keen wit. That's one of the things I look forward to in comics. He's a really bright guy and his work is best when he uses it to make little satirical points," Cavalieri said. "He takes off on a lot of things—the deal making in Hollywood, the 'Iron John' men's movement, current trends.

"We've already seen, in the 2099 series, a lot of these sort of splinter groups and cults, and this sort of takes off on that. We've already introduced one cult that worships Thor and thinks that Thor is coming back. There's a group in California who is quite like that, who's managed to get a hold of gamma radiation, which has been outlawed in the 2099 universe.

"Actually, it's not as broad or laugh out loud funny as the other stuff Gerry does; it's a very serious story with those elements that mirror current events and extrapolate them one hundred years. If Hollywood goes on, if the men's movement goes on, this is a look of what it will be like."

In 2099 gamma radiation and experimentation have been outlawed, due to the great danger to human beings. "Gamma radiation experiments have finally done so much damage [they have] been outlawed. Then we find out about this group in the Hollywood Hills who are fooling around with it and using it for very noble, very humanitarian reasons. But it's up to our hero, John Eisenhart, to stop them and if not stop them, at least get in on the deal somehow."

The first team book in the 2099 Universe will be the **X-MEN 2099**. That group's highly anticipated jump into the future will be handled by writer John Francis Moore, who also scripts **DOOM 2099**, and the artists will be Ron Lim and Adam Kubert."

"In the current Marvel Universe, there's been a tremendous amount of mutant proliferation, and that proliferation has come to an abrupt halt because of something called the 'Great Purge,'" Cavalieri explained. "The mutants that you'll be seeing in 2099 are the first of a new breed. They don't take off from any in the present era, not even those who come from the future, like Cable or Bishop—there's no connection."

The mutants of the future are a new class; a slave class, born to poor families who couldn't afford to have their child born without the mutant "message" in its **DNA**. Those who manifest the mutant traits are outcasts in their own society—much like in the present day Marvel Universe, but for future reasons.

Taking charge of a band of mutants, to bring attention to their plight as unwanted orphans in the corporate world of 2099, is a Vietnamese immigrant. Himself a mutant, he was born with one hand which has been grossly deformed, and can wither things at a touch.

"...everything came to an abrupt end because of the GREAT PURGE..."

A spiritual leader, he preaches "agressive non-violence." His crusade quickly comes to be viewed as a threat by high powered executives all over the world. When an assassination attempt leaves him crippled, he has no choice but to seek protection and form the new mutant strikeforce.

The 2099 X-Men will include four men and three women: Bloodhawk, who has organic wings and talons; Skullfire, who can manipulate ambient energy; Metalhead, whose strength comes from the absorption of materials such as iron or lead; Meanstreak, who can move at high speeds through his ability to "molt" his skin; Serpentina, a contortionist; Cerebra, who can scan minds and through physical contact, regulate human body functions; and Krystalin.

PROGRESSIVE FUTURES

SPIDER-MAN 2099, **PUNISHER 2099**, **RAVAGE 2099** and **DOOM 2099**, continue taking their adventures deeper into the future and Joey revealed "we expect a major crossover by December 1993…"

For the first-born 2099 creation, **SPIDER-MAN 2099**, (by Peter David and Rick Leonardi) the editor hopes "to see more details spin-off in some of the adventures he's having Downtown." Joey is intent on keeping the book separate from the present day web-slinger. "Peter and I have this deal going between us that we don't really want to create villains that take off on modern day villains. We want to try and break new ground. The only exception has been Vulture 2099."

Following the conquest of Latveria, new adventures in **DOOM 2099** (by John Francis Moore and Pat Broderick) will take Doom all the way to the Cyberverse. "He's going to go off to China [to] see if he can make that part of his empire," Cavalieri said. "We get to see what China's like one hundred years from now; it's not necessarily like today."

For the Stan Lee/Paul Ryan **RAVAGE 2099**, there are plans for "a change of costume…an addition of a super power, and some problems resulting from them." The incredible amount of energy Ravage's hands now contain will make him more powerful, while also draining him because of its intense strength."

A three-part storyline upcoming in **PUNISHER 2099** entitled "Love and Bullets" will have the Punisher battling the Fearmaster and the Forces of the Cyber Nostra. Moreover, he'll continue to be investigated by Kerry, the psychiatrist who will discover the secret of the Punisher.

The crossover storyline will be worked out by all the 2099 writers and artists who will get together and, Joey joked, "we won't let them leave until we have a plot.

"It is important to me that there be a really genuine, really plausible reason for the four characters, who are quite disparate in approach, to get together against an equally plausible threat," Cavalieri said. "It is important to me that this is done right, that it is not gratuitous. They are four characters that are loners, and I don't know that there's anybody that Doom would want to work with, or that it's a good idea for the Punisher or Ravage to be working with a team. And I don't know if I want Spider-Man in a team just yet.

"But there will be a reason for them to be on the same side. Some even stronger menace, and that is definitely slated to happen before the end of '93," Cavalieri promised.

FUTURES AND PASTS

Things have been running smoothly for the Marvel Universe of 2099 thanks to the open-ended histories that have allowed for creative freedom for the writers and artists and have maintained a peaceful Bullpen. "There [have] been no office politics," Cavalieri said. "There are no arguments because [the 2099 Universe] is connected, but it's *not*.

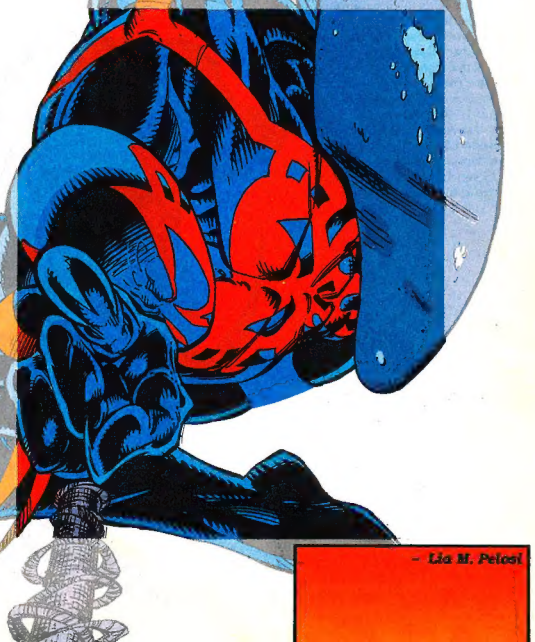
"You don't want to have Peter Parker's son because you don't want to wreck whatever it is Danny's doing. Besides," Cavalieri continued "Spider-Man in the original version appears in about five books a month. I think that's enough for anybody.

"I don't have characters who are immortal showing up, in case somebody does a storyline with, let's say, the Silver Surfer dying. If he shows up one hundred years later, we know that he's not dead," Cavalieri explained. "If Peter's having trouble with Mary Jane, it doesn't make any sense to have his kid show up because then we know that everything is okay with him, or at least they worked it out in some way.

"I try to stay away from that kind of continuity. But it's very much the Marvel Universe—just one hundred years later, that's all."

Are there any hopes for *further* expansion?

"If you can pretty much clone me, and we can get another guy," Cavalieri said, laughing. "That would be good. That way I could go out and hang for a while and the other guy could come and take this *interview* aggravation."



– Lia M. Pelosi

Epicenter FEUD SKETCHBOOK

"Usually, one day a week, I take a break from all of the comic art that I'm working on to draw just for me, then I draw characters like the ones we're using in FEUD," Mark Nelson said of the four-issue limited series from Epic Comics that he is producing along with writer Mike Baron.

Feud is the story of a distant planet where four races have coexisted for centuries. Each race has a special talent and area of the planet. There is a delicate balance between these races. Peace hangs by a tenuous thread until the heir to the Skids throne is kidnaped...

The result is war. On these pages you will see the preliminary sketches and character designs that Mark used in creating the series, along with his comments. "I've been working on those things, off and on, since about six months before Mike called me [last summer]," Mark revealed. "Mike pitched several ideas to me, and I responded by saying 'I've got all these wonderful creatures, why don't I send them to you and let's work up a story about these guys.'"

1. "The Kites supply the paintings, music, textiles and items that ease the burden of life in the society. The Kite castle in the background is thousands of generations old with each layer built on top of another. It reaches into the sky, the Kite's domain."

FEUD: TM & © 1993 Mike Baron and Mark Nelson. All rights reserved.

2. "The Stokers are the only race capable of making body armor, cutlasses and assault weapons for the other races. However, they do keep the best weapons for themselves. Stokers are easily recognized by their large tusks."

3. "The amphibious Skids, whose castle stretches above and below the sea, are the accomplished fishers who trade their catch to the other races." The Skids are colored like Amazon poisonous frogs.

4. The first Grunt study. "The Grunts mine precious metals and gems which are necessary for the Stokers' machines, the Skids' ships and as ornamentation for the Kites' artworks. The Grunts are powerful, slow moving creatures."

"The Grunts will also be like Jackson's chameleon."

5. "Another race yet to come."

For more of FEUD, see the four-issue Epic Comics limited series written by Mike Baron (PUNISHER) and illustrated by Mark Nelson (*Aliens*), beginning next month.

HELLO I MUST BE GOING

AN INTERVIEW WITH FABIAN NICIEZA

Fabian Nicieza is one of Marvel's most prolific writers, molding destinies that include those of **THE NEW WARRIORS, X-MEN, X-FORCE, NOMAD** and **NIGHT THRASHER.** Also a staff editor, he maintains a stable of characters that runs the gamut from **REN & STIMPY** and **MAD DOG** to **HELLSTORM** and **WONDER MAN.**

In order to give readers some insight into the workings of his eccentric creative mind, Fabian took time out of a schedule so busy that he rarely knows if he's on his way in the door or on his way out. . .

"I yam what I yam, and that's all that I yam!"

"The reason that they give me a paycheck is to be an on-staff editor, 9 am to 5 pm in the office. The reason that I'm in the offices, it would appear, is to agitate, complain, whine, cause trouble, and criticize everything," Fabian said. "And they pay me to do freelance writing at home, or on the train, or at the doctor's office; anywhere but within that 9 am to 5 pm time period."

Fabian's writing workload for 1993 consists of seven monthly titles, a limited series, and several other sundry books, including the appropriate annuals and the second issue of the X-Men quarterly, **X-MEN UNLIMITED.** His writing responsibilities alone seem Herculean. Add to them the editorial duties of four monthly series, three limited series, and four one-shot projects, and one has to wonder just how Fabian accomplishes so much.

"The only thing I can think of, that makes me do what I do, is a healthy amount of passion and a strong dose of ego and arrogance," Fabian continued. "I think you have to be committed to what you want to do — I *should* be committed for doing what I do.

"You have to have something to say."

Fabian believes that writers, in general — not necessarily in comics, do not have enough to say. "I have something I want to say. I do not perceive it as being of world-ending importance, but if anyone were to read my work as a cumulative whole, if anyone out there is stupid enough to do a 'Fabian Nicieza Critical Thesis,' they would see that I have underlying messages to much of my work."

As to what those messages are: "I would rather not say, because they're my passions, my angers. One thing I do *not* do is analyze my own work. My opinion," he continued, "is that the readers are the ones who are going to determine whether my work is good or not. An editor will hire me if *they* like my work, not if *I* like my work."

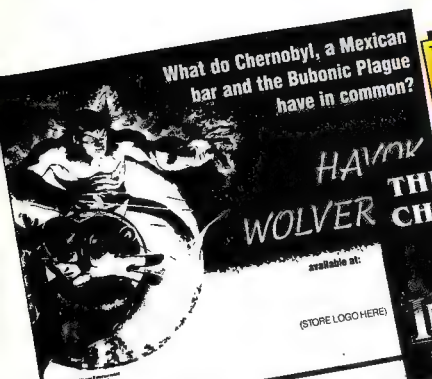
Fabian was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1962, and did not move to the states until he was four years old. While growing up in Argentina, he and his brother, Mariano, watched the old *Batman* and *Superman* movie serials from the '40s and '50s, dubbed in Spanish. This was their first exposure to super heroes. They discovered comic books when they arrived in the United States in 1966.

Originally, they only bought DC comics, because they contained the characters that they remembered from those television shows in Argentina. Then, according to Fabian, their friend Barry told them, "DC comics suck, man! You oughta read Marvels."

"We didn't know any better," Fabian explained. "We were just learning to read English, so we tried some Marvels and liked them because, well, let's face it they were better! We read them from then on. My brother and I still argue over who was the first to buy a Marvel."

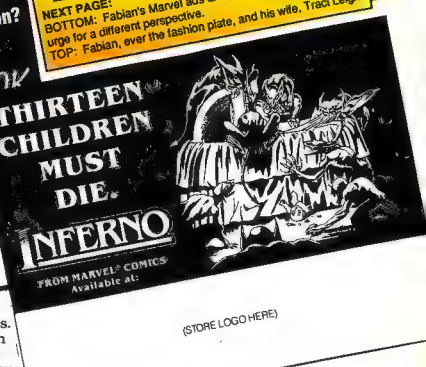
There was a drop off point in high school when Fabian stopped reading comics. He did not pick them up again until midway through college. "I was in school, so I had plenty of free time with nothing to do other than go to the bars," he said with a laugh. "I finally decided to do something slightly less constructive, instead, so I started reading comics again." During this time Frank Miller's **DAREDEVIL,** Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing,* and Walt Simonson's **THOR** were on the shelves. These rejuvenated his interest in the medium.

Fabian graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in Advertising



THIS PAGE: Samples of Fabian's advertising work–ready-to-use comic book store co-op ads.

NEXT PAGE:
BOTTOM: Fabian's Marvel ads and posters often reflected his urge for a different perspective.
TOP: Fabian, ever the fashion plate, and his wife, Traci Leigh.



and Public Relations.

He initially interviewed at both Marvel and DC for a position in their Sales and Marketing departments. "DC did not hire me. If they had, I'd probably be working for them to this day, writing the whole Impact line." Marvel did not hire him, either. That job went to today's **MARVEL AGE** editor, Steve Saffel. "Marvel opted for experience and professionalism, much to their chagrin, over cherubic innocence and a sweet disposition," Fabian joked. "Ironically, Steve hired me two years later as his assistant."

During the interim, Fabian got a job at Berkeley Publishers, first in their production department and then as a managing editor. In the latter position, he was responsible for liaisoning between the production and editorial departments. The job taught him scheduling, traffic processing, and working within a deadline, but he still wasn't doing PR and advertising, like he wanted.

"I was a low-paid peon in the publishing biz before I came aboard Marvel," he continued with a smile. "I probably could have ended up doing ad copy for Michelin or Ex-Lax, but I was lucky enough to get a job doing ad work for comics, which is a fun medium."

"Much of my life, up to this point, can be attributed to a good dose of luck, and a lot of hard work."

Between a rock and a hard place

He began working at Marvel in the Manufacturing department, but quickly moved to promotions, where he was responsible for producing promotional posters, house ads, subscription ads, fanzine ads, and sell-sheets and co-op ads for retailers and distributors, as well as working with others on convention giveaways.

"The most difficult thing about the job," Fabian explained, "was producing as much work as we had to on a monthly basis, with as limited a budget and as short an amount of manpower as we had."

After four and a half years that included writing copy for three fanzines, four house ads, four sell sheets, and two posters a month, Fabian burned out. "I remember coming up with this cute bit of copy that said something to the effect of, 'He's back and he's gonna kill ya.' I really liked it. The reason why I liked the line so much was that I had written the exact same line three years earlier. That's when I knew it was time to move on. I did not leave because I disliked the work," he stressed. "I still like it, and would love to do it to this day. I was just burnt out.

While in the Promotions department, Fabian began freelance writing in his spare time. "I was scrambling around like nuts, doing anything I could get — eight pagers for **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS**, backups for annuals, fill-in issues."

Editor in Chief Tom DeFalco wanted Fabian to move up to editorial. He thought that Fabian had the skills to take a project from its conception to its production, and that he knew the Marvel characters well. "My work on promotional materials was analogous with putting together a comic," Fabian explained. "In order to create a promo poster, I had to come up with the idea, write the copy, hire the artist, get the mechanical done, and then get it printed at the manufacturers." In May of 1990, he took Tom up on his offer and has been an editor at Marvel ever since, as well as the company's most prolific writer since Stan Lee helmed fourteen titles three decades ago.

Death of a Salesman

Being both an editor and a writer puts Fabian in an interesting quandary. How does he separate the ideas he has as a writer from all the ideas writers bring to him as an editor? He revealed that learning how to edit was a slow, difficult process. "It took me a while to divorce myself from how I would write a piece, [in relationship with] how I should edit someone else's writing," he said. "As an editor, what I am doing is taking the vision someone is giving me and making sure that it is focused. [For example,] I wouldn't want to disparage Gerry Jones's vision on **WONDER MAN**, even if I did not agree with it on an issue to issue basis. My job is not to make him do 'X' or 'Y,' my job is to make sure that his 'X's' and 'Y's' are as good as they can be."

Fabian made sure to point out that *any* writer can have a string of "30 fantastic stories and then give [the editor] a real clunker." He believes that this is only natural but, as an editor, he has to make these stories work, too.

And how does Fabian deal with an editorial decision made on a book that he is writing, with which the editor in him does not agree? "I fight," he revealed. "I have butted heads with many editors at various times, over differing philosophical approaches to the medium, what we

say and how we say it." Eventually, Fabian hopes to come to a happy medium with the editor in question, because he realizes the responsibility that the editor is under. "If something happens in a book that stirs up trouble, it is the editor that will be called on the carpet. If the sales drop for any reason, it is the editor who is going to get his ass chewed out. People do not understand the million and one little odds and ends that an editor is responsible for, not the least of which is the basic livelihood of the people they employ. 'My voucher didn't go through' might mean that person didn't have money for rent this month, and I was responsible for getting that voucher through."

An incident with **WONDER MAN** penciler Jeff Johnson brings to light the concern and passion Fabian displays in everything he does, and expects from those around him. **WONDER MAN**'s schedule was lagging during the latter months of its first year. Thus, Fabian was placed in the position of calling Jeff and telling him they would have to get a guest artist to draw the final two issues of the year, while Jeff got himself back on schedule. This would mean that Jeff would be unable to draw the entire first year of the title, something Fabian felt would have benefited Jeff, a newcomer to the industry.

After a ten minute diatribe by Fabian, explaining the why's and wherefore's of his actions, Jeff simply replied, "It's OK. I understand. I'm sorry." Fabian calmly hung up the phone and freaked. "That is not what I wanted to hear. I wanted him to be angry. I want my people to have an anger and a passion and a possessiveness over what they do."

"But Jeff is passionate about his work," Fabian went on to explain. "He's just too smart to lose his hair from stress. So, in retrospect, I guess it was OK, he understood, and he was sorry. What can you do?"

no need to fear; Underdog is here

Much of Fabian's personality is revealed in his approach to the titles he writes. One example is **NEW WARRIORS.** In the beginning, it was a book that, it seemed, no one believed in. "Even the people within the company were pooh-pooing it," he declared. "I wanted to make something of the book. I'm a big fan of the underdog, maybe because I always felt that I was one. There is nothing I enjoy more than turning people's thoughts on something.

Although part of his taking on **NEW WARRIORS** was because he had no other work, that was the least of his reasons for wanting to write it. "I saw the team as having a lot of potential. I like writing teenage characters. They're rife with internal conflicts which lead to good inter-personal problems and turmoil, which leads to interesting stories."

Fabian firmly believes that **THE NEW WARRIORS** is a top ten book, and should be selling on **X-MEN** or **SPIDER-MAN** levels. Even though the book is exceeding everyone's expectations, he pointed out, only now are the characters being recognized for other uses, such as custom comics. "Someone from within the company called me," he recounted, "asking if I knew of any other minority characters at Marvel who had prominent roles, other than those on her list. There wasn't a single New Warrior on that list! Here I am, busting my ass to get a diverse mix on the team, whether it be by gender or ethnic heritage — including three or four African-American ongoing members. . .and no one knows who they are. It's infuriating because it's that underdog thing again."

That "underdog thing" has its roots in Fabian's childhood. He came to a new country at a young age, had the odd name, and had to learn the language while starting school. "It was never an insecurity thing," he pointed out. "I led a very normal, routine life. I just have a real passion for what I perceive is right and wrong in this universe. Anger fuels the work itself and gives me the opportunity to get passionate."

This penchant for dissecting his surroundings, never taking anything around him at face value, came from his father, who would always "question the things he saw, read, or heard. I still argue with my dad about everything," he revealed. As a result, Fabian wants to get his audience to think, too. "I never want to give [them] my point of view. I want them to think about their options. People in this country are very rigid in their way of thinking. They

THIS IS

Fabian and brother Mariano while still in Argentina.

Fabian, looking more like Frankie Avalon and up to his neck in trouble, with Mariano offering moral support. Fabian's affinity for the beach manifested at an early age.

are brought up to think that you grow up, graduate high school, go to college, or if not college, you get a vocation, get married, have kids — everything is pre-planned. Little thinking is done about the consequences of things, the order of the planet, how this civilization developed, what we did to become this country."

If Fabian's father was his greatest influence in terms of his questioning, his mother provided his stubbornness, work ethic, and propensity to bull through obstacles.

Fabian's inspirations? "Quite honestly, nobody," he replied. "I'm not really inspired by others. There are those people in the entertainment fields whose work I respect immensely, people whose work I look at to guide my own. I look to James Cameron for action/adventure elements, David Mamet for interpersonal characterization, and, in art, I love Vincent Van Gogh for that psychotic, troubled style that pushes you to think. I like the anger, confusion, and hypocrisies of our existence, but I did *not* have a miserable life, so I don't know where that comes from."

One man's pill is another man's poison.

This summer, at the San Diego Comic Convention, Fabian hobnobbed with William Shatner and participated in a panel with him, because of Fabian's position as editor on the Marvel/Epic adaptation of Shatner's **TEKWORLD** novels. Whereas most people would be excited to meet "Captain Kirk," Fabian was unfazed. "I put it all in perspective," he stated, then explained with an incident from his childhood.

When Fabian was about fifteen, he went to a *Cosmos* soccer game. He loved the sport and had the opportunity to get an autograph from his favorite player, Giorgio Chinaglia. Chinaglia was not the most popular Cosmo on the team — that distinction went to Pele because of

"GREAT! FIRST DOLPHINS. NOW THIS!"

FABIAN NICIEZA.

HIS SECRET? . . .the SULU PHASER TRICK.

his agility and grace. Chinaglia held a place in Fabian's heart because of his tenacity. "He was the bulldog. He pushed and got the scrappy cheap goals. I was the same way, not the gifted, graceful soccer player."

Fabian was one of the lucky few who got Chinaglia's autograph. "When I woke up the next morning, I looked at it and thought, 'what the hell am I going to do with this signature on a piece of paper?' and I threw it out. I thought 'what good is this for me and my life?' — not that much. Ever since then, I've put things into perspective.

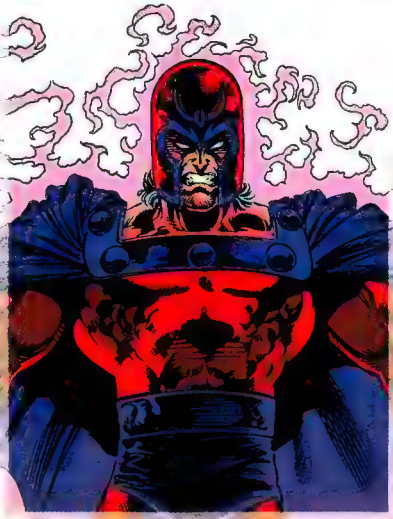
"I can put being on stage with William Shatner into perspective because, after I do that panel, I have to go back to the Marvel booth, where there's a line of 25 kids waiting for an autograph, and I can put that into perspective because, after I do that, I go back to the convention hotel and Ralph Macchio whips my butt in a game of tennis, and I can put that into perspective because, when I get home, my wife Tracy says I've got to take out the garbage."

A man of great passion and conviction; a champion of the underdog; a tenacious, stubborn, creative individual who never loses sight of his humanity. This is Fabian Nicieza. His secret?. . . .the Sulu Phaser Trick. "It is the seminal, life-forming influence on me, the reason that I'm so mean and cantankerous. I will never tell people what it is, especially not in print."

Fortunately, the force behind the Sulu Phaser Trick, Fabian's brother, Mariano, has no such qualms. "First, let me start off by saying that I love my brother dearly," Mariano said. "[When we were kids] my job every morning before we went to school was to wake him up. Before he became this prolific writer that everyone knows, he was just a lazy high school kid that wouldn't get up in the morning. 'Come on, get up' wasn't doing it. So there was a light switch near the wall and it activated a light over his bed. Every morning, every. . .single. . .morning, I would wake him up by switching on the light, right in his face, then switching off the light and yelling, *'Sulu, fire phasers!'* Turn on the light switch, *'Sulu, fire again!'*. . .until he would wake up. I guess it sort of traumatized him."

– Steve Vratilas

THE HUNT FOR MAGNETO



In June and July, through selected Marvel titles, readers will be able to enter the "Hunt for Magneto," the biggest contest in recent comics history. Since 1993 marks the thirtieth anniversary for the X-Men and the Avengers, Marvel is launching the event during the joint celebration. Participants in the "Hunt for Magneto" contest will be eligible for prizes ranging from uncut card sheets to mint copies of the original 1963 **X-MEN** and **AVENGERS #1's.**

HOW TO ENTER:

Readers can enter — and win — the contest three ways. **UNCANNY X-MEN #303, AVENGERS #365, X-FACTOR #94, X-MEN ADVENTURES #11,** and **AVENGERS WEST COAST #98** will arrive in stores in June and July, each containing a "Hunt for Magneto" game piece which includes: a scratch-off game, a clue to Magneto's whereabouts, and a mail-in card for entry into the grand prize contest.

SPECIAL TRADING CARDS:

At the center of "Hunt for Magneto" is a commemorative **X-MEN/AVENGERS** Anniversary trading card collection consisting of ten cards featuring new artwork by Lee Weeks. Each "Hunt for Magneto" game piece will feature one card from the second half of the set, so that every person buying one of the participating issues will receive a card.

Sets of the *first* five cards will be sent to "instant winners" and to select "Hunt" respondents. Some winners will receive uncut sheets of these first five cards, many signed by Marvel Publisher Stan Lee.

SCRATCH-OFF WINNERS:

50,000 lucky participants will win prizes in the scratch-off game. Those who uncover Captain America on the game card will win sets of **X-MEN/AVENGERS** Anniversary trading cards 1 through 5. Those who uncover Magneto will receive an *uncut* card sheet of the first five cards.

Entrants who come up empty in the scratch-off part of the contest have another opportunity to win cards 1 through 5, and to give the X-Men a hand in locating their nemesis-in-hiding, Magneto. (The X-Men know he's out there and waiting to strike, and to avoid a surprise attack, they're going to have to get to the Master of Magnetism first.) Each "Hunt for Magneto" game piece will include one of five clues to his whereabouts. Each clue offers the reader an opportunity to locate the villain, and readers buying all five comics will have all five clues. For each clue, the first one thousand entrants who name the correct location will receive the first five trading cards.

OTHER PRIZE WINNERS:

The prizes get much bigger for winners of fourth, third, second, and grand prize drawings. Readers are automatically entered in these catagories when they send in the mail-in portion of the game piece to Marvel by **August 31, 1993.** Those who wish to keep the piece intact may enter by sending their names, addresses, and phone numbers on a 3 x 5 card to **"The Hunt for Magneto," Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.** Prizes will be awarded by mail, so participants must supply this information legibly. There is no purchase necessary for this part of the contest.

Fifty fourth place winners in the grand prize drawing will each receive a softcover copy of the **AVENGERS MASTERWORKS** personally autographed by Stan Lee. Another fifty winners will get a copy of the **X-MEN MASTERWORKS,** also in softcover with Lee's signature.

One lucky third prize winner will snatch up a beautiful X-Men jacket from the hit FOX animated series and an uncut card sheet signed by Stan Lee. Varsity-style with leather sleeves and a rendering of Wolverine by Ty Templeton, the jacket is the same as the one worn by the cartoon production staff.

The second place winner will receive the choice of an X-Men or an Avengers video arcade game, along with an **X-MEN/AVENGERS** uncut card sheet signed by Stan Lee.

THE GRAND PRIZE:

The grand prize winner will receive a most rare and valuable treasure, a complete set of X-Men and Avengers #1's in mint condition, including **UNCANNY X-MEN #1, X-FORCE #1, X-FACTOR #1, X-MEN ADVENTURES #1, X-MEN #1, AVENGERS #1,** and **AVENGERS WEST COAST #1.** This individual will also collect the original artwork for cards #1 through 5 of the Avengers/X-Men Anniversary series, framed and ready to display.

Participation in this contest, and the trading cards that come with the game pieces, are absolutely free to readers. Prices for participating Marvel titles will not change to cover additional production costs. According to Marvel's Marketing Manager, Sven Larsen, "The great thing about this contest is that everybody's a winner because of the free trading card [included on every game piece]." He added, "Fans have given the X-Men and the Avengers a lot of support over the last thirty years, and [the contest] is a chance to give something back in a very positive way."

FOR MORE DETAILS:

Larsen suggested that readers take a look at the special 16-page insert that is included in X-titles arriving in stores in May. These titles include **CABLE #3, UNCANNY X-MEN #302, X-FACTOR #92, X-MEN #22, EXCALIBUR #67, WOLVERINE #71, X-FORCE #24,** and **X-MEN ADVENTURES #9.** The insert, which is also free, will provide complete rules for the "Hunt for Magneto" contest, along with information on **DEADPOOL, AVENGERS,** and **GAMBIT** limited series, as well as other special events surrounding the thirtieth Anniversary celebration for the X-Men and the Avengers.

– Terry Hernon

Mark's REMARKS

When I was among the riotous ranks of Marvel's rollicking readers, I would muse to myself what a cool fraternity of creative people there was in the comics biz. Sometimes I got to wondering which of them really liked to hang out together and which ones would leave the room when somebody else entered. Sure, according to the Bullpen Bulletins, everyone was one big happy family, but surely there had to be cliques within that family. So I'd scour whatever scraps of behind-the-scenes info, but there was always precious little grist from which to draw my conclusions.

Flash forward. Now at last I'm in that cool fraternity, and one of the great things about it is I finally know who likes and dislikes whom! Which brings me, in my usual roundabout fashion, to my topic this month,

cover boy Fabian Nicieza (pronounced "nice 'n' easy, unlike his writing). What would you guess—do Fabulo and I get along or are we family feuders? Let me present some circumstantial evidence, then you decide.

I am a 39 year old Wisconsin native, with a background in art and cheese, who writes **CAP** and **QUASAR**. He is a 31 year old Argentina native with a background in advertising and sheep dip. We both worked on New Universe team books, **DP7** and **PSI-FORCE**. We collaborated on a one-shot called **THE DRAFT**. Now we both shudder when anyone says "Say, is there a draft in here?"

I used to be the most prolific writer on staff, doing on average two and a half books a month in addition to my staff work. Now he's the acknowledged champ, doing on average five to seven books a month in addition to his staff work.

We're both married to blonde women. He's known his for more than ten years, I've known mine for two.

We both use prescription minoxydil to prevent male pattern balding; my treatment is working, he's starting to look like Professor X.

He can stand to listen to Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, and Madonna. I can't.

I have a younger sister; he has an older brother.

We both have cats.

He's very outspoken, opinionated, and a pain in the butt. I'm quiet, unassuming, and a pain in the pancreas.

I believe that every character who is killed should stay dead forever. He believes every character with even a shred of untapped potential should be brought back from the dead (kicking and screaming).

I once had to talk him out of giving up trying to write for Marvel, when his early efforts were not greeted with the respect he and he alone felt they deserved. He talked me into the practice of shaving while taking a shower in order to save time and soften up the stubble.

My name means "green forest," his means "bean grower." (He likes it when fans call him "Beany"—really! Try it next time you see him at a convention, comic book store, or yard sale.)

I've contributed to the Marvel Universe such deathless characters as Brother Nature, the Slug, and Pinball. He's contributed the equally deathless Sea Urchin, Sweepzweaks, and Pretty Persuasions.

I live in New York City; he lives in the New Jersey suburbs.

We had a moped race in Key West, Florida once—he won.

He's gotten his lens-cracking mug photographed for the cover of **MARVEL AGE**, I get a drawing that gives me a long stubbly nose every month in "The Bossmen."

So add up all those factors and you decide: **ARE FABIENTITY AND I GOOD BUDS...OR FEUDING RIVALS?**

Wait—don't answer yet. I've got anecdotes about the Fabester that are certain to change your opinion.

Anecdote one:

I went for a ski weekend with the Fabianator, **NOMAD** Editor Glenn Herdling, and **AVENGERS** Editor Ralph Macchio. Before we left we took up a collection around the Marvel offices. A collection of what, you ask? A collection of loose hair that many yanked freely from their heads or stomachs. Putting our copious collection in an envelope, the F-man ignorant of its existence, we drove up to the lodge Friday night, went to bed, and the next morning, while Fabery was in the facility, Glenn and I sneaked into his room and spread much of our nefarious hair collection across his pillow. When he returned and started to make his bed, he freaked out over his *sudden* hair loss, not noticing the numerous strands of hair with color and texture quite different from his own.

Glenn and I feigned sympathy, and fought to keep ourselves from laughing when Fabo opined that it must be the high altitude of the mountain precipitating his hair loss.

The next morning we decided to pull the same maneuver, but found that we had already used too much of our hair collection the previous morning. Glenn, however, had an inspiration, went to the shower, and scooped up all the wet cruddy hair to be found in the drain. While Fabiot was showering, Glenn took Fabibaby's hair dryer to dry off the gooey gob of hair. Alarmingly, though, Fableau stepped out of the facility sans glasses and caught Glenn on the floor of his room, hair dryer in hand. Glenn quickly feigned drying his own hair and explained that the outlet in his room was on the fritz.

Fabery bought it! So the moment

he left, Glenn finished blowing off the hair clump, spread it about Feebian's pillow, and scampered out. Sure enough, Fabezilla came back, found it, and again waxed dolefully about his accelerated hair loss. Eventually we told Fabinox about our ploy, and had a good laugh at his gullibility.

My name means "green forest," his means "bean grower."

Anecdote two:

Another ski trip. Glenn again. Me again. Fabeany again. And Ralph Macchio's assistant, Pat Garrahy. Hoping to top the previous gag, I brought along a four-inch ponytail of my own hair, saved from a previous haircut, and a scissors with a bright orange handle. When I was out of the room, Glenn told Fabiuk and Pat that they should wait till I fall asleep and cut off my ponytail (I still sport one and have for the past five years). The two were aghast. "You nuts? You're going to be in a lot of trouble! He'll have us all fired!" "No," says Glenn, "Mark can take a joke!" Neither of them wanted any part of the scheme.

On Sunday morning, I pretended to sleep late with my back toward the door (ponytail exposed), Glenn palmed the ersatz ponytail and the scissors, poised above my bed, waited until Fabiator walked by the open door of my room, and pantomimed the Big Snip. Fanfabe caught sight of what Glenn was doing and ran to the kitchen, exclaiming to Pat, "He did it! He did it! Aw, man, is he gonna be in trouble!" Pat didn't believe it. Then Glenn scurried in, waving the ponytail like a trophy, a goofy grin fixed on his face. Both looked at the 'tail—it sure looked authentic. Finally I came staggering in, my 'tail tucked under the turtleneck I wore to bed (it being cold at night in ski lodges). All eyes were on me. Faborrah casually stepped around me to peer at the back of my neck with eyes agog. "He did it—aw, man—you're in so much trouble!" Pat came to look, too, and it actually took them a minute or two to twig onto the tuck job. Fabelot—fooled again!

Okay. Weigh the evidence. Fabercetomy and me. Friends or foes?

Answer: I love Fabuloid. He, as far as I know, can stand me. One of the books he writes is one of my top five favorites Marvel publishes. He in turn occasionally pages through the books I write, clothes pin affixed to his nose. I find him amusing, witty, and fun to be around; he finds me much the same only the opposite. Final verdict: Fabuttocks is without question my 232nd favorite person in the industry and I'm pleased as a well digger with waterproof underwear to have been asked to write about him in this, his day in the spotlight (just watch out for the glare off his dome).

Fabe replied: "It's cool. In the words of Martin Mull on *Fernwood Tonight*, 'if we can't kid each other, who can we kid? When you come right down to it, I can take the abuse. I mean, consider the source…"

Mark Gruenwald

THE BOSSMEN by RICK PARKER

GEEZ, MARK.. DAVID WOHL LOOKS AWFUL!
YER RIGHT!
TOM... I THINK DAVID WOHL IS OVERWORKED... MAYBE WE OUGHT TO LET HIM HAVE AN ASSISTANT...
ARE YOU NUTS?!! WHAT FOR--?! HE'S ONLY GOT 8 BOOKS!! IF I GIVE HIM AN ASSISTANT, I'LL HAVE TA DO DA SAME FOR SKOLNICK AN' DA OTHERS!!!
...I'M TELLIN' YA... TH' POOR GUY'S A WALKIN' ZOMBIE! HE NEEDS AN ASSISTANT-- HE CAN BARELY KEEP HIS EYES OPEN AT EDITORIAL MEETINGS.. WHAT IF ONE OF HIS BOOKS MISSES SHIPPING..?
OKAY..OKAY... YA CONVINCED ME.
THE NEXT DAY...
... AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE XEROXING, COME RIGHT BACK!!! I PROMISED ASHFORD AND FEIN YOU'D FILE SOME SCRIPTS FOR 'EM-- AN' HEY-- GET ME A COFFEE--AN' ONE FOR YOURSELF-- YOU LOOK AWFUL.'
RIGHT, DAVE..

THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES

Adam Warlock, pivotal player in intergalactic affairs such as **THE INFINITY WAR** and **WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH**, will be the focus of the new deluxe series **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES**, springing from the fires of **THE INFINITY CRUSADE** this April.

Jim Starlin will write the monthly **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** and will be joined by penciler Tom Raney (**THE UNCANNY X-MEN**) and inker Keith Williams (**WEB OF SPIDER-MAN**). Printed in deluxe full bleed format, it will be priced at $2.00. **THE CHRONICLES** will combine the cosmic and dramatic power of Starlin's **INFINITY** books with the focus of a solo book. For the first five issues, its plot will be enmeshed with the **INFINITY CRUSADE** storyline, along with **WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH**. Like **THE INFINITY GAUNTLET** and **THE INFINITY WAR**, which came out in '91 and '92, **THE CRUSADE** will be a full-blown crossover extravaganza pitting Marvel's heroes against one another as they battle Warlock's "good" female half, The Goddess.

While the other books in the crossover will focus on the heroes of the Marvel Universe — some working together to oppose The Goddess, others fighting on her behalf — **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** will explore in-depth the strengths and weaknesses of Warlock's powers. Working with Warlock to defeat The Goddess are Warlock's old enemies: Thanos, the worshipper of Death, and The Magus, who reappeared in **THE INFINITY WAR** as Warlock's evil self. A mysterious mystic named Darkiore also crosses Warlock's path in these first few issues, but Starlin does not plan to focus on this character until the **CRUSADE**'s final battle is won.

THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES will be a tense and action-filled psychological drama, as Warlock, still recovering from his battle with the Magus, battles the Goddess and

deals with the violent conflict created by the inherent differences between himself, Thanos, and the Magus. "Warlock finds life after being an omnipotent god confusing and aimless. He's just trying to get by," Starlin said.

After working with the Warlock character for the past few years and over several mini-series, Editor Craig Anderson felt that there was something missing. As he said, "Warlock is such a fascinating character that we were having a lot of trouble doing all that we wanted with one monthly book. He is. . . totally unique to comics; there has never been a character like him in the past."

In crossovers, the group dynamics and interpersonal relationships are strongly emphasized because so many different and, at times, conflicting characters work together or against each other. "Crossovers show the interesting dynamics of the internal structure of the Marvel Universe," Anderson said. On the other hand, the individual stories and battles often must be sacrificed in order to highlight the big picture. Thus, Editor-in-Chief Tom DeFalco encouraged the development of **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES**, Warlock's first solo series since the '70s, so the readers could more clearly experience the drama of Warlock's psyche, even as he battles cosmic villains.

"Warlock finds life after being an omnipotent god confusing and aimless."

Adam Warlock has never felt comfortable with himself. Even as an omnipotent god-like being, he felt discontent and uncertainty over his own ruling ability. He chose to peel away the good and evil parts of his persona in order to be a better god. Then, having fallen from godhood, he became frustrated with the "ideological world," as Starlin calls it. **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** will deal with these frustrations on a more psychological level than any other **INFINITY** series. In the midst of battles with the Magus and the Goddess, Warlock will do his best to come to terms with his own evil and good sides.

Although Warlock has gone through so many changes over the years, Starlin stressed that the hero still has the basic traits that made him interesting and exciting when he was first created in the '70s. Warlock has always had religious aspects, has always felt conflicts within himself, and has acted upon his discontent. Warlock has evolved with Starlin over the past twenty years or so. "My approach to the character has changed since I've grown older," Starlin said. Readers will be able to see Starlin's newest take on the character most clearly in **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES**, because it is written from Warlock's point of view.

"...death is the ultimate stake."

One of the ways Starlin keeps Warlock's psycho-drama fresh and exciting is the use of tragic, real life themes, including death. The theme of death runs through most of Starlin's work, whether it concerns the death of Captain Marvel, or the use of characters such as the death-worshipping Thanos. Many other writers continually skirt death through the use of intricate sub-plots or amazing discoveries, but death in comics seems only natural to Starlin, as he said, "In comic books, we play a lot of high stake games, and death is the ultimate stake."

Starlin is not afraid to stop writing when the end of a storyline is at hand. **THE INFINITY CRUSADE** will be the last cosmic crossover concerning the Infinity Gems. Although **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** begins under the **CRUSADE**'s umbrella, Warlock's solo adventures will not end with the **CRUSADE**'s final battle. Warlock is so powerful, and his actions are so far-reaching, that Starlin has already planned another story arc in which Warlock, accompanied by the Silver Surfer and other powerful heroes, will attempt to cure Thor of the insanity that plagues the Thunder God in the pages of **THE MIGHTY THOR**.

There's no rest for the cosmic.

— Sonja Ratcliffe

Stan's SOAP BOX

Hi, Heroes.

Remember the TV series, "Mission Impossible?" Remember how it opened with the leader receiving a secret recording which said something like, "Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to rescue a kidnapped dinosaur who's trapped in a flying saucer hidden in a locked dungeon within the belly of the Sphinx." Or some such.

Well, I feel like part of that show whenever I get my monthly missive from Steve Saffel. "Your Soapbox topic, should you choose to accept it, is to tell how it was to write most of Marvel's lineup years ago, while striving to maintain the quality."

Of course, I could answer very simply and truthfully in just three words, and then take the rest of the day off. "It was tough!" But, I fear eagle-eyed Steve might notice that it wouldn't be enough to fill this page.

I'll start by letting you in on a little secret. It's common knowledge that Marvel was the first comic book company to feature continued stories. Readers gave us credit for being fearless enough to take chances with such a radical innovation.

Now here's where the secret part comes in. Continued stories had nothing to do with courage. They were just a necessary short cut for me. As you can imagine, every time you write a new story, you have to come up with a new plot, a new villain and a new set of circumstances to grab the reader. Pretend you're me back there in the sixties, having to write about a dozen mags a month, including **SPIDER-MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, X-MEN, THOR, DR. STRANGE, THE HULK, IRON MAN, SILVER SURFER, AVENGERS, DAREDEVIL, NICK FURY**, etc. Each story needed a new plot. That meant a new villain and all the rest of that jazz. If you've ever tried your hand at writing, you know how long it takes to come up with a good plot. Just suppose you had to invent a dozen each month! It would hardly leave you the time to write the stories themselves.

That's where the short cut comes in. I saved a ton of time by taking one plot and stretching it over many issues. Instead of spending so much time making up different plots, I could be spending that time completing the stories. It was one of the ways that made it possible to keep juggling so many script-balls in the air, if you'll excuse the horribly mangled metaphor.

Of course, what started out as a time-saving device turned out to be a good idea, quality-wise. We found that the continued stories, being longer, gave us more room for character development, and the addition of sub-plots helped to round out the stories so they read more like mini-motion pictures.

TALES OF SUSPENSE
featuring
IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
12¢
66
JUNE
IF ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS, JUST IMAGINE WHAT THESE TWO PICTURES ARE WORTH!

Another time-saving device was the practice of discussing the plot with the artist, then letting him "break it down" any way he wished. Allowing the artist to determine what he would draw in each panel, rather then telling him what to draw in a detailed script, also saved a lot of time. Even more important, the artists were able to do what they did best with no interference from the writer. So once again, it was not only a great time saver, but it gave us strips that were a perfect blending of story and art, which is what a comic strip is ideally meant to be.

The third and most important time saver was the fact that I was the editor as well as the writer. Since I've always been a big fan of mine, I loved everything I wrote so I never had to waste time telling myself to change it! (Only kidding, of course, but hey! —maybe there's more truth to that than I suspect!)

Now that you know all my secrets, I hope you won't spill the beans to our competitors! Though, if you do, I can always console myself with the thought that "Exceptio probat regulam!"

Excelsior!

"THEY WERE JUST A NECESSARY SHORT CUT FOR ME. . ."

~ Stan Lee

Hot Sheet

Welcome to "Hot Sheet," **MARVEL AGE**'s way of pointing out upcoming books that professionals around comicdom recommend you keep an eye on. This month, "Hot Sheet" reviewers look at several projects guaranteed to entertain. Read on. . .

WARLOCK GOES BEYOND INFINITY

Beginning in April, the entire Marvel Universe will once again be pulled into a huge battle for the soul of all reality in **THE INFINITY CRUSADE**, a cosmic war that will thrust Adam Warlock from our universe into his own new solo book, **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES**. This new cosmic adventure series — written by Jim Starlin, penciled by Tom Raney, and inked by Keith Williams — will cross-over with the six-issue **INFINITY CRUSADE** saga, and will follow Warlock's trek through other realities, as well.

Many people around the industry are excited by the promise that **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** and its creative team holds. Mark Gruenwald, Marvel's Executive Editor, when asked to flip through an advance preview of the series, said "I like Warlock's new costume. Plus, Jim Starlin has long been one of Marvel's pre-eminent Cosmic Saga creators, and one of my all-time Marvel favorites. Here he's on top of his game. I look forward to seeing him blaze new ground... or should I say space."

Comic book retailer Steve Gursky, proprietor of the Pennsylvania/New Jersey chain *Steve's Comic Relief*, commented on artist Tom Raney's addition to **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** team. "Every so often," Steve observed, "a good artist with steady credentials is assigned to a title and becomes noticed. He or she may have been doing wonderful work for years, but suddenly there is an affinity between a character and artist and the combination explodes with excitement.

"It looks to me as if Tom Raney has found his book," he continued, "and it looks to me as if Warlock, who has had some pretty remarkable artists (Gil Kane, Jack Kirby, Jim Starlin and Angel Medina to name a few) has inspired Tom. His storytelling is crisp and dramatic. I look forward to these new adventures written by Jim Starlin, who has written Warlock longer than any other writer."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:
"This looks sick... But sick in a good way! I'm a huge Hulk fan and this book will feature a new version of one of my all-time favorites. I'm interested to see this variation of the character."
—Marvel Assistant Editor Glenn Greenberg on the Hulk's appearance in 2099 UNLIMITED.

More high praise for the upcoming **WARLOCK CHRONICLES** included —

• Shawn Bantz, assistant manager at the Southern California comic chain *Comics Unlimited:* "**THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES** looks stunning! I've enjoyed Tom Raney's art on **UNCANNY X-MEN** and **WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH**. The sketches for the new book look terrific. This will be a good starting point for new readers because it is a beautifully rendered re-telling of his origin and history."

• Glenn Greenberg, assistant editor at Marvel Comics: "I'm looking forward to **THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES**; I'm a big Jim Starlin fan. Also, having seen Raney's work in **INFINITY WATCH** — stuff I was impressed with — I think they couldn't have gotten a better artist for this series."

DINOSAURS? NOT!

THAT IS BECAUSE THE STOKERS ARE THE ONLY RACE CAPABLE OF MAKING BODY ARMOR, CUTLASSES AND ASSAULT RIFLES. THEY WILL SELL WEAPONS TO THEIR NEIGHBORS, BUT THEY KEEP THE BEST FOR THEMSELVES.

FEUD. TM & © 1993 Mike Baron & Mark Nelson.

BARON HITS HARD — TWICE!!

Mike Baron is known to comic book readers as the creator of *Nexus*, writer of the **PUNISHER**, and a guru of hard-driving action and adventure. Naturally then, Mr. Baron's two latest creations are both part of Epic's new "Heavy Hitters" line of books.

SPYKE, a four-issue limited series set to begin this April, follows the interdimensional travails of a Chicago security agent and reunites Baron with artist Bill Reinhold, who collaborated with Mike during his stint as writer of **PUNISHER** and recently illustrated Jim Starlin's **SILVER SURFER** graphic novel. **FEUD** teams Baron with Mark Nelson of *Altens* fame for a tale set on the planet of Smithback, a world divided by a brutal four-way race war.

Mike Gold was fortunate enough to work on several Baron projects during his time as an editor at *First Comics* and *DC Comics*. Now with the Connecticut comic book chain *Dream Factory*, Gold has been reunited with Baron through "Hot Sheet." "It's nice to see Mike

and Bill back together doing what they do best — unrestrained action with a slightly wacky bent. There's a lot of heart in **SPYKE**, and combining Baron's trademark martial arts expertise with the offbeat pan-dimensional angle of this story reminds me why his legion of fans are so loyal. This should go further than the **PUNISHER** and **SILVER SURFER** crowds. People who have never checked Mike and Bill's work out before will be left drooling, hungering for more."

"And **FEUD**," Gold continued, "this one is for people who think Baron's gone normal. I've been a big fan of Mark Nelson's lizards for a decade now, and it's great to see them slithering around out where they can be seen by one and all. If anyone thinks that comics are getting staid, **FEUD** will set their minds at ease. . . and their adrenaline pumping!"

Shawn Bantz just might be one of those new Baron and Reinhold fans Mr. Gold was refering to. "At first glance, I was pessimistic about **SPYKE** due to his looking like a certain movie director," Bantz admitted, "but as I read the preview I found a very good story accompanied by strong plot lines that make the writing sharp. It is like *Highlander* with a *Time Bandits* twist. I think Marvel readers will enjoy it very much. The artist allows for a mysterious looking atmosphere which gives your imagination some fun."

Other comments on **FEUD** come from retailers and editors:

"IT'S LIKE HIGHLANDER WITH A TIME BANDITS TWIST."

• Marie Javins, Epic Comics editor: "Mark Nelson is a hidden talent in this industry. I look for **FEUD** to be the sleeper hit of the Spring. Plus, the book has a really cool logo."

• Mark Minoff of the Toronto, Canada comic book store *Silver Snail:* "I enjoyed the preview of **FEUD**, with its four warring alien races that seem to be more human than we might think. The artwork looks great with pencils and inks by Mark Nelson. . . Mike Baron is a great storyteller and this plot starts right off with politically engineered espionage."

TWO FROM THE FUTURE

Over the last few years, Marvel's ever-growing universe has expanded in size and in scope as several series exploring the future hit the shelves. This May, two new titles take that trend to the next level. **2099 UNLIMITED**, a new quarterly anthology, will look at the Marvel Universe of that far-forward era, while Marvel UK's **CYBERSPACE 3000** explores the far reaches of the galaxy's future.

SPYKE

SPYKE: TM & © 1993 Mike Baron & Bill Reinhold.

The first issue of **2099 UNLIMITED** features a **Spider-Man 2099** story by Evan Skolnick and Chris Wozniak, as well as the oft-speculated first look at **Hulk 2099** by Gerard Jones and Dwayne Turner.

Shelton Drum of *Heroes Aren't Hard To Find*, a retail chain based in Charlotte, North Carolina, commented: **"2099 UNLIMITED? What a *great idea!* Marvel heroes in the "future" have always been fan favorites, and the recent fabulous success of the 2099 titles have been no exception. Now we have a place where the future of the Marvel Universe can be explored in detail, and who better to start with than Spidey himself? Of course, the future Webhead may not think so when he comes up against Mutagen! And it certainly looks like Mr. Green Genes' savage nature will return with a vengeance by the year 2099! Hulk 2099 looks positively bestial. I can't wait to see what Gerard Jones and Dwayne Turner have cooked up for us."**

While 2099 continues to focus on events here on Earth, **CYBERSPACE 3000** and its cast will be in outer space, encountering the likes of the Silver Surfer and Galactus. The series is by writer Gary Russell **(DARK ANGEL)** and artist Steve Tappin. Several "Hot Sheet" correspondents commented on the potential for excitement inherent in **CYBERSPACE 3000.**

• Steve Snyder, owner of Columbus, Ohio's *Central City Comics:* **"This Marvel UK entry looks to be very intriguing. The idea of a space ark set adrift in the Marvel Universe is brimming with potential. Gary Russell and Steve Tappin should have no problems coming up with stories for this series."**

• Buddy Saunders: **"CYBERSPACE 3000, Marvel UK's new science fiction series is going to be hot! The Guardians of the Galaxy and an angry Galactus guest appearing all in one story! What more do you need? Gary Russell writes a great science fiction story about mankind's struggle to survive in the final frontier."**

SOCIETY CASTES OFF FOR THE FUTURE

Last but not least, there is **OFFCASTES,** an Epic Comics "Heavy Hitter" from the mind of writer/artist Mike Vosburg *(American Flagg).* This tale of a future forcibly divided into upper and lower classes is sure to turn some heads with its insightful writing and highly stylized art.

"The other series I like this month is OFFCASTES," said Mark Minoff. **"Like FEUD, OFFCASTES has** political overtones, although in its case they are of the class distinction variety. The Earth is the center of a group of colonies and the upper class of people are those born on the planet; these people are the privileged few who are free to pursue whatever they want. The characters are likeable and you get a real feel for the society in which they live, which seems to be fairly one-sided and corrupt."

BE A PART OF HOT SHEET

Readers take note: you can be a part of **MARVEL AGE** and "Hot Sheet." All you need to do is send us a letter naming one or two ongoing Marvel or Epic series that you recommend as a good read and great fun to other comic book readers. Include in your letter a few sentences why you think that book is great and, *voila,* you may be spotlighted in an upcoming "Hot Sheet." Send your missives to:

MARVEL AGE
ATTENTION: HOT SHEET
MARVEL COMICS
387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NY, NY 10016

Shelton Drum also looks forward to **OFFCASTES,** which he sees as a series ripe with the things that make comic books enjoyable. **"This comic looks great! Mike Vosburg's pencils look fabulous, and the story looks like it will have a lot of suspense — until it reaches the breaking point and explodes into an action thriller. . . Science fiction, mystery, action, all rolled into one great story! My kind of book."**

Six books that are causing a buzz throughout the comics world: these six titles will keep everyone busy until the next installment of "The Hot Sheet."

– Jerry A. Novick

You ever WONDER what might happen if the MARVEL 2099 CREW came FACE TO FACE with their PRESENT DAY COUNTERPARTS?...
...ANGST? Pal, the kinda angst I got, they haven't even INVENTED yet!
Yeah? Maybe not, but I don't suppose YOU were indirectly RESPONSIBLE for your own uncle's DEATH either, were you?
Okay, I'll give you THAT one, but the guy I work for--well, he makes J. JONAH JAMESON look like your AUNT MAY!!
TRUCE, fella. After all, we have WAY too much in common to be BICKERING like this.
I guess you're right. Look where ARGUING got the TWO PUNISHERS...
OF course, THEY had GUNS...
At least DR. DOOM doesn't have THESE worries, since there's only ONE of him.
Oh, I don't know--
--I think the Doc has his own SPECIAL set of PROBLEMS...
I AM the ONE TRUE DOCTOR DOOM!!
AM NOT!
AM TOO!
AM NOT!
AM TOO!
AM NOT!
by Fred Hembeck
SPECIAL THANKS to Steve Gerber!!

WHAT IF..

THERE WAS NO LETTER COLUMN

Spider-Man proved to be a crowd pleaser with the younger audience at the landmark Asakusa district in downtown Tokyo.

LETTERS

Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Attention, correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

Brrr... This month's rather chilling letter column title comes to us from Nick Smith of Bellvue, NE. Thanks, Nick! But no need to worry—even though we're in the process of making some big decisions about the title of this column, there's no danger of it going title-less. It's just a question of whether we keep rotating the title every month or pick up a single, snappy title and stick with it. We'll be announcing our decision in just a month or so.

Which gives us the perfect opportunity to remind everyone that there's still a little time to make send in your title for the next letters column. If we use your title, we'll even thank you right here in this space, because, hey, that's just the kind of guys we are.

Dear Marvel,

I noticed your challenge in MARVEL AGE #117 to analyze our favorite character and find out what makes them what they are. I decided to give it a try, and took a look at my favorite Cajun Robin Hood, Gambit. Here's what I found:

1) The man is a modern-day swashbuckler. He stays cool under fire and can wisecrack in any fight.

2) His energizing power is one of the most attention-getting (almost like Wolverine's claws); who wouldn't notice a playing card that acts like a live hand grenade?

3) He lives life on his own terms, with a gusto unmatched by many.

4) Gambit is a consummate ladies man. Just look how he is with Rogue; with French blood running in his veins, how can he lose?

5) Out of all the weapons he could carry, he uses a quarterstaff.

6) Along with John Blaze and

Nomad, Gambit looks cool in a trench coat.

In conclusion, Gambit is a lovable outlaw, and let's be honest; we all admire outlaws like him because they do the things we're too inhibited to do. He's so bad, he's good. I think that says it all.

So until Gambit becomes a Vegas card dealer, Make Mine Marvel!

Jon Marshall
200 East 15th Street
Dover, OH 44622

Hmm... Looks like you've pretty much summed it up, Jon. We hope that other folks out there will take the time to follow your lead with their own favorite characters. After all, there's nothing so fun as a down-home gabfest, eh, mon ami? It's the truth—I "gaa-ron-tee!"

Speaking of guarantee, one thing you can always count on when reading this column is finding a timely, thought-provoking LETTER OF THE MONTH! Past Letters of the Month have dealt with everything from crossovers to race relations, but this time, we broach a new topic...letters!

Dear Sirs,

I would like to take this opportunity to address the continued degeneration of Marvel's letter columns as a whole.

While there are exceptions—though few and far between—it would seem that the present in-house policy is "if it doesn't kiss butt, forget it." The five Marvels I picked up during the weekend of September 11 contained lettercols with a total of 29 letters, 98% of which did not contain a single negative comment. In fact, most began with, "Your comic is awesome," "Superb! Spectacular! Great!" or something to the same effect.

Don't you think that's a little much, even for Marvel?

While I wouldn't doubt that the majority of mail you receive is positive, I'm sure that you receive at least one well-thought-out, critical letter for any given issue; after all, you can't please everyone. Yet, on average, you continue to present us with the mindless ravings of drooling fanboys.

For the most part.

This brings me to the negative letters that, through some miraculous act of God, do see print. Whether intentional or not, it would seem that the prominent tendency is to belittle the letter writer or any coherent points he/she may have attempted to establish through humor or condescension. On rare occasion that this is not the case, the topic of discussion is manipulated with the diplomatic skill one would associate with a long-time politician. Much is said, but the topic is never directly addressed. This would lead one to believe that the fans' opinions are not given due consideration or respected and that, unless you are willing to look the fool, it is better to keep your thoughts to yourself.

I should point out, however, that Marvel is not the only comics publisher to indulge in printing self-serving letters, although I would place it as a forerunner.

As a would-be letterhack, I may be more receptive to the mindless cruel drivel that dominates today's letter columns than the average fan, but I feel this is an area sorely in need of change, lest it degenerate further.

Thank you for your time.

Marson Fedrick
P.O. Box 514
Ellisville, MS 39437

Well, Marson, you raise some interesting points. To be honest, though, MARVEL AGE has always printed negative letters. Moreover, all of MARVEL AGE's negative letters were answered with the thought and consideration they deserved. The subjects were addressed and no on was belittled. However, let's also bear in mind that *everyone's* opinions deserve to be respected; referring to other people's opinions as "the mindless ravings of drooling fanboys" will do more to keep your letters out of print than writing negative letters will.

The editors we spoke to agreed. BARBIE Editor Hildy Mesnik said, "Marvel policy is to print any letter that contains coherent, constructive criticism...good or bad. As sales show, we have a lot of fans that *like* our books. As such, believe it or not, a lot of our mail is positive. It is also not our policy to belittle any letter...good or bad, and we're sorry someone interpreted any response that way."

Evan Skolnick added, "I try to print a mixture; negative letters aren't always helpful. The best ones we get are those that explain themselves in a legitimate, constructive way. Not just, 'I hate such-and-such's artwork' or 'so-and-so's writing stinks.'"

Marvel editorial policy is to try and maintain a letters page that will be entertaining and informative. The letters page of each book is individualized, with a great number of writers and therefore, no uniformity of approach. Nor is

How do you say "Excelsior" in Japanese? Stan and Spidey with a couple of employees at the Tokyo offices of Shogakukan Production Co., Ltd. (Sho Pro).

At the formal introduction of the Marvel Universe to the Asian business community, the web-slinger got involved in the action with Yoshiya Takayanagi, Managing Director of Sho Pro (left) and Marvel President Terry Stewart.

there a categorical opposition to printing negative letters, Executive Editor Mark Gruenwald said, "We're at the mercy of the mail we get." And a lot of that negative mail happens to be unconstructive and unusable criticism.

In the meanwhile, you raised a thought-provoking point. Thanks for taking the time to write.

Dear MARVEL AGE,

I found it. The Galactus Marvel Value Stamp #100 appeared in **SUB-MARINER** #72, September 1974. Do I get a No-Prize, subscription, or a Marvel Value Stamp book? (I never did get one, even though I sent for one back then.)

Ray L. Laurn
2315 Adams Street
Two Rivers, WI 54241

Thank you Ray! Consider yourself no-prized, as should Kevin Gordon of Kansas City, MO and Brian Gilson of Friendsville, MD, who have equally long memories. We appreciate the info, folks.

Of course, when it comes to passing along classified information, no one can beat our favorite Wild Agents of Marvel. And you know what that means—it's time for our monthly...

And remember: If you want to take part in a future WAM Jam yourself, all you have to do is write to us on official WAM stationery or include your WAM I.D. number in your letter. We'll be looking for you down the secret mail drop.

Yo, WAM!!

Normally, I don't write to you guys, but after seeing the sneak preview of the **X-MEN** TV show, I couldn't help myself!

You got the X-Men's voices right on the money. They are exactly the comic book counterparts in both personality and attitude. And the music was the best I've ever heard. I had my TV blasting from beginning to end. Give Mr. Levy a pat on the back. You should also consider making a soundtrack available to WAM members. I know I'd buy it.

I'd have to say that the best thing was the show's comic book feel. Not only was it two parts, but the Beast was captured and now we have to wait till the next episode to see what happens to him.

I'd say "Night of the Sentinels, Part II" was my favorite. The best scene was Wolverine's flashback while he was driving away in anger. It was dramatic and the music fit the mood. Not only was it sad seeing Morph get killed, but it showed how dangerous being an X-Man can be and that anything can happen at any time.

I really look forward to seeing an appearance by Cable! Will I see Stryfe and Psylocke? If so, in which episode?

I Hope this will spawn an **X-FORCE** and a **SPIDER-MAN** series. Until next time, *always*, Make Mine Marvel.

Robert Luce, Jr.
Agent #02097
(Address withheld by request)

But tell us Robert, did you like the show?

Seriously, though, you've had the chance to see a bunch of episodes by now and we hope that they have lived up to your expectations. Personally, we've been getting a kick out of the close correspondence between the storylines in the TV series and past stories from the comic book. We suspect that it has more than a little to do with the ongoing give-and-take between the series' producers and the X-MEN Editor Bob Harras.

Given Bob's insider status, we asked him whether Cable, Stryfe and Psylocke will be putting in any appearance in the near future. He said that they're still talking about Stryfe and Psylocke, but Cable will definitely turn up before too long. In fact, by the time you read this column, he may even have appeared already.

So what does everyone else think about television's version of the X-MEN? We'd like to hear what you think. And keep an eye out for our special X-MEN 30TH ANNIVERSARY MAGAZINE this July, where X-MEN ADVENTURES Editor Kelly Corvese will be offering the inside scoop on the future of the mutant animated series. Warm up those VCRs, and start the popcorn popping, and we'll see you right back here after another four episodes have hit the airwaves.

checklist

GUEST APPEARANCES

DARKHAWK #29 1.25
New Warriors
DEATHLOK #25 1.75
Black Panther
FANTASTIC FOUR #378 1.25
Spider-Man, Daredevil, Silver Sable
HELLSTORM #4 2.00
Ghost Rider
KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON II #13 1.75
Death's Head II
METEOR MAN #3 (of 6) 1.25
Spider-Man
MOON KNIGHT #52 1.75
Gambit and Werewolf by Night
NIGHTSTALKERS #9 1.75
Morbius
SHADOW RIDERS #2 (of 4) 2.50
Cable & Ghost Rider
SILVER SURFER #52 1.25
Gladiator, Beta Ray Bill, Terrax & Jack of Hearts
SUPER SOLDIERS #4 1.75
The Avengers, USAgent & Captain America
TERROR INC. #13 1.75
Ghost Rider

First Week

2099 UNLIMITED #1 3.95
THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE #1 (of 4) 2.50
ALIEN LEGION: ONE PLANET AT A TIME #1 (of 3) 4.95
AVENGERS WEST COAST #96 1.25
CABLE #3 2.00
The Six Pack regroups.
CAGE #16 1.25
CAPTAIN AMERICA #417 1.25
The conclusion of the Savage Land saga.
DAREDEVIL #318 1.25
DARKHAWK #29 1.25
Chris travels back in time to prevent his father's murder.
DARKHAWK ANNUAL #2 2.95
DARKMAN #4 (of 6) 2.95
NAMOR #40 1.25
The climax of the Atlantean Civil War.
NIGHTSTALKERS #9 1.75
NOMAD #15 1.75
The conclusion to "Hidden In View."
ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER #13 1.75
Ghostle battles the rampaging Roulette.
PUNISHER: ORIGIN OF MICROCHIP #1 (of 2) 1.75
REN & STIMPY #8 1.75
Private eye Ren searches for the Maltese Stimpy.
SHADOW RIDERS #2 (of 4) 2.50
SHE-HULK #53 1.75
"To Die and Live in L.A." part 2 (of 6).
SPIDER-MAN 2099 #9 1.25
Miguel returns uptown.
SPIDER-MAN CLASSICS #4 1.25
Re-presenting Spidey's first battle against Dr. Octopus.
THUNDERSTRIKE #2 1.25
UNCANNY X-MEN #302 1.25
The return of the Upstarts.
UNTAMED #2 (of 3) 1.95
WARLOCK CHRONICLES #1 2.95
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #102 1.25

MATCHES OF THE MONTH

DAREDEVIL #318 1.25
DD vs. Tatterdemalion, Stiltman & Taskmaster
DOOM 2099 #7 1.25
Doom vs. Fever
GHOST RIDER #39 1.75
GR vs. Vengeance
INCREDIBLE HULK #407 1.25
Hulk vs. Piecemeal
INVADERS #3 of 4 1.75
The Invaders vs. the Battle Axis
NIGHTSTALKERS #9 1.75
Hannibal King vs. Morbius
QUASAR #48 1.25
Quasar vs. Thunderstrike
SECRET DEFENDERS #5 1.75
The Defenders vs. Roadkill
THUNDERSTRIKE #2 1.25
Thunderstrike vs. Juggernaut
X-FORCE #24 1.25
X-Force vs. the Six Pack

Second Week

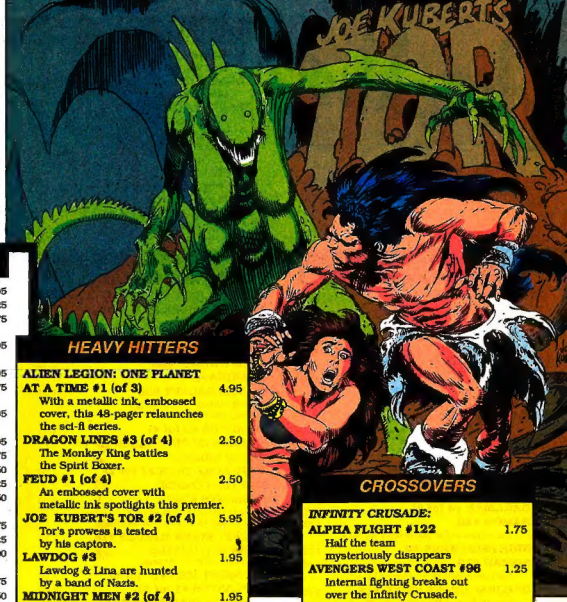
ALPHA FLIGHT #122 1.75
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #379 1.25
BARBIE #31 1.25
DARKHOLD #10 1.75
"Betrayal" part 3 (of 3).
GHOST RIDER #39 1.75
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #38 1.25
Maj. Victory receives a gift from the Beyonder.
INVADERS #3 (of 4) 1.75
KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON II #13 1.75
LANCE BARNES: POST NUKE DICK #4 (of 4) 2.50
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #132 1.50
Four tales of Ghost Rider / Iron Man/Iron Fist & Wolverine.
MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #14 2.75
New tales of Iron Man, Speedball & Dr. Strange.
MIDNIGHT MEN #2 (of 4) 1.95
OFFCASTES #1 (of 3) 2.50
PUNISHER WAR ZONE #17 1.75
The world of corporate espionage.
QUASAR #48 1.25
RAVAGE 2099 #8 1.25
Who will replace Deathstryk?
REN & STIMPY TPB: PICK OF THE LITTER 12.95
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #211 2.25
New artist Rafael Kayanan.
SECRET DEFENDERS #5 1.75
SILVER SABLE #14 1.25
SLEEPWALKER #26 1.25
SPIDER-MAN TPB: ORIGIN OF THE HOBGOBLIN 14.95
WARHEADS: BLACK DAWN #1 (of 2) 2.95
WILD THING #4 1.75
Nikki hunts the dealer of a deadly virtual reality program.
WOLVERINE #71 1.75
Wolvie, Rogue & Jubilee search for Magneto.
WONDER MAN #23 1.25
Wondy makes a deal with the Grim Reaper.
WONDER MAN ANNUAL #2 2.95
X-FACTOR #92 3.50
X-MEN ANIMATION ADVENTURES #9 1.25
The debut of Colossus.

ANNUALS

DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #9 2.95
Debuting the Devourer
DARKHAWK ANNUAL #2 2.95
Introducing Dreamkiller.
NAMOR ANNUAL #3 2.95
Presenting the Assassin.
WONDER MAN ANNUAL #2 2.95
Premiering the Hit-Maker.
(All are polybagged with a trading card of the new character.)

Third Week

AVENGERS #364 1.25
The return of Giant-Man.
CONAN #270 1.25
The return of "The Devourer of the Dead."
CONAN SAGA #76 2.25
CYBERSPACE 3000 #1 2.95
DARK ANGEL #12 1.75
The aftermath of the Mys-Tech War.
DOCTOR WHO #198 4.95
DOOM 2099 #7 1.25
EXCALIBUR #67 1.75
Concluding "Days of Future Yet To Come."
G.I. JOE #138 1.75
INCREDIBLE HULK #407 1.25
Debuting "Origins of the Pantheon."
MAD DOG #3
MARVEL AGE #126 1.00
Epic's *Barkeverse*, Marvel UK's latest, and the mad mind of Fabian Nicieza.
MARVEL MASTERPIECES COLLECTION #3 (of 4) 2.95
MARVEL TALES #275 1.25
Spidey must save MJ from the Hobgoblin.
MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED #2 3.95
Ghost Rider, Morbius, Nightstalkers & Darkhold.
MORBIUS #11 1.75
NAMOR ANNUAL #3 2.95
PUNISHER #80 1.25
SPIDER-MAN #36 1.75
SPYKE #1 (of 4) 2.50
SUPER SOLDIERS #4 1.75
TROUBLE WITH GIRLS #2 (of 4) 1.95
WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH #18 1.75
WHAT IF #51 1.25
"What if the Punisher Became Captain America?"
X-MEN #22 1.25
The mystery of Psylocke's origin deepens.



TOR: TM & © 1993 Joe Kubert.

Fourth Week

AKIRA #34 4.95

BARBIE FASHION #31 1.25

BLACK AXE #4 1.75
Black Axe travels back to ancient Egypt.

DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #9 2.95

DAREDEVIL/BLACK WIDOW GN: ABBATOIR 14.95

DEATH'S HEAD II #8 1.75
The conclusion to the "Lionheart" saga.

DEATHLOK #25 2.95

DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS #7 4.95

DR. STRANGE #55 1.75

DRAGON LINES #3 (of 4) 2.50

FANTASTIC FOUR #378 1.25

FEUD #1 (of 4) 2.50

GHOST RIDER & BLAZE: SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #12 2.75

GROO THE WANDERER #103 2.25

HELLSTORM #4 2.00

THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD #7 (of 12) 1.75

INFINITY CRUSADE #2 (of 6) 2.50

IRON MAN #294 1.25

JOE KUBERT'S TOR #2 (of 4) 5.95

LAWDOG #3 1.95

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #133 1.50

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT JUNE 1993
Free checklist of Marvel's June offerings.

MARVEL SPOTLIGHT: HEAVY HITTERS #4
Free info on April's new Heavy Hitter titles.

MARVEL UNIVERSE HANDBOOK #32 4.95
With bios on Maverick, Captain Universe, the Kree, Mephisto & Paibok.

MOON KNIGHT #52 1.75

THE 'NAM #82 1.75
The Tet Offensive.

NEW WARRIORS #37 1.25
Rage's grandmother is killed.

PUNISHER 2099 #6 1.25
Part 1 of "Techno-Gladiators."

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #56 1.75
The pulse pounding conclusion t, "Hyper."

SILVER SURFER #82 1.25

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #202 1.25

TERROR INC. #13 1.75

THOR #464 1.25

VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR #6 (of 6) 2.95
Venom and Spidey make "peace."

WARHEADS #13 1.75
The hypnotized teammates battle one other.

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEK WORLD #11 1.75
Jake must bring in his ex-lover, Warbride.

X-FORCE #24 1.25

X-MEN CLASSIC #85 1.25

HEAVY HITTERS

ALIEN LEGION: ONE PLANET AT A TIME #1 (of 3) 4.95
With a metallic ink, embossed cover, this 48-pager relaunches the sci-fi series.

DRAGON LINES #3 (of 4) 2.50
The Monkey King battles the Spirit Boxer.

FEUD #1 (of 4) 2.50
An embossed cover with metallic ink spotlights this premier.

JOE KUBERT'S TOR #2 (of 4) 5.95
Tor's prowess is tested by his captors.

LAWDOG #3 1.95
Lawdog & Lina are hunted by a band of Nazis.

MIDNIGHT MEN #2 (of 4) 1.95
A new Mignight Man is hijacked into service.

OFFCASTES #1 (of 3) 2.50
Journey to a bleak Earth of the future, under an embossed, metallic cover.

SPYKE #1 (of 4) 2.50
This latest premier features a metallic ink/embossed cover.

TROUBLE WITH GIRLS #2 (of 4) 1.95
Espionage, sexy women, and an unwilling hero.

UNTAMED #2 (of 3) 1.95
Griff and Dane continue their war against the Yakuza.

PREMIERES

2099 UNLIMITED #1 3.95
The debut of Hulk 2099.

THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE #1 (of 4) 2.50
Re-presenting Moebius's classic SF saga.

ALIEN LEGION #1 (of 3) 4.95

CYBERSPACE 3000 #1 2.95
A glow-in-the-dark cover spotlights this new UK series.

FEUD #1 (of 4) 2.50

OFFCASTES #1 (of 3) 2.50

PUNISHER: ORIGIN OF MICROCHIP #1 (of 2) 1.75
This 48-pager explores Micro and Frank's relationship.

SPYKE #1 (of 4) 2.50

WARHEADS: BLACK DAWN #1 (of 2) 2.95
The premier features a red metallic embossed cover.

WARLOCK CHRONICLES #1 2.95
Featuring a holo-grafx foil embossed cover.

CROSSOVERS

INFINITY CRUSADE:

ALPHA FLIGHT #122 1.75
Half the team mysteriously disappears

AVENGERS WEST COAST #96 1.25
Internal fighting breaks out over the Infinity Crusade.

DR. STRANGE #55 1.75
Doc uses the Orb of Agamotto to find the Goddess.

INFINITY CRUSADE #2 (of 6) 2.50
Global peace breaks out on Earth.

IRON MAN #294 1.25
Tony sends his new armor to the space station.

THOR #464 1.25
Thor falls under the Goddess's control.

WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH #18 1.75
Pip takes over as the new leader!

MAXIMUM CARNAGE:

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #379 1.25
Part 7 (of 14): Spidey & Venom battle Carnage & his killers.

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #202 1.25
Part 9 (of 14): Spidey's alliance with Venom begins to dissolve.

SPIDER-MAN #36 1.75
Part 8 (of 14): Iron Fist & Deathlok join Spidey against Carnage.

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #102 1.25
Part 6 (of 14): Spidey forms an alliance with Venom.

FOR LOVE NOR MONEY: MERC WARS:

CAGE #16 1.25
Part 5 (of 6): Cage, Terror & Silver Sable face the fury of the Carnal Serpent.

SILVER SABLE #14 1.25
The climactic battle against Priapus.

NOW TO PERPLEX THE PATHETIC PALOOKA WITH MY PARALYZING PACHYDERMOUS PERCUSSION PITCH.
FAAAABIAN! FAAAABIAN!
DON'T BEAN ME. DON'T BEAN ME. DON'T BEAN ME.
MAY
DARREN AUCK

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						HAPPY BIRTHDAY LEE ANN TAYLOR JOSIE McCAIN 1
GLENN HERDLING 2	BILL SIENKIEWICZ DARREN AUCK DAVIDE SHARPE 3	 4	 5	DENNIS JENSEN ROB CAROSELLA 6	MALLORY LILES JOEY CAVALIERI 7	MOEBIUS (JEAN GIRAUD) JOHN KALISZ 8
BARBARA SLATE 9 **MOTHER'S DAY**	ANTHYA FLORES LYNAIRE BRUST STEVE BUCCELLATO 10	 11	GEANICE SMITH 12	ALAN GORDON 13	 14	PAUL CURTIS BETTY SIMMS ANITA SHARPE 15
FRED GRAY 16	STEVE GEIGER 17 **VICTORIA DAY**	JAMES FRY 18	 19	 20	RICHARD ASHFORD 21	MARY POPE 22
23 JOHN BOLTON WIN MORTIMER	24 EVAN SKOLNICK AL BENSEW	STAN SAKAI	HERB TRIMPE JOHN GALVIN JAMES FELDER	JOHN GOLD SETH DEITCHMAN	MARINA LUM-KANG	
 30	ANDY YANCHUS 31 **MEMORIAL DAY**	 25	 26	 27	 28	

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